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ABSTRACT

Although the role of the student development professional has changed along with the mission of the community colleges, the models providing a theoretical framework for the profession have remained relatively unchanged. In 1937, the American Council on Education published a statement which declared that student development professionals were to facilitate the intellectual, personal, social, and moral development of the student. A number of theoretical models have since evolved. In 1972, a Human Development Facilitator Model was proposed that presented the student personnel worker as committed to positive human development and as possessing the skills and expertise needed to implement programs for the realization of human potential. Another model, the Maintenance Model, reduced the student development function to an unintegrated set of services available through various offices of the college. In 1975, the American College Personnel Association released a position paper which emphasized the intentional and systematic use of adult development theories in carrying out assigned functions, such as skill and attitude development and the integration of learning experiences. In 1986, the League for Innovation in the Community College reaffirmed the principles of student development established in previous years and recommended minimum requirements for assuring student success. Challenges expected to influence the student development profession in the coming decade include the quality reformation, educational technology, financial constraints, changes in institutional mission, and enrollment management. These challenges will required the development of innovative strategies and practices to address future needs. (JMC)

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ERIC DIGEST
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Are New Models of Student Development Needed?

Kathleen Rodarte Hernandez

As the mission of community colleges changed and expanded, so too did the roles and functions of student development professionals. However, the models providing a theoretical framework for the profession have remained relatively unchanged. From the 1900's well into the 1950's, student development professionals were viewed as surrogate parents, ensuring students' welfare and proper behavior. The perception that this is an appropriate role for the student development professional lingers today. This digest will discuss the issues currently faced by student services professionals, the models proposed to address them, and the practical application of these models.

Student Development Models

In 1937, the American Council on Education published the Student Personnel Point of View Statement, the first national guideline for student development practice. The statement declared that student development professionals were to facilitate the intellectual, personal, social, and moral development of the student (Leach, 1989). A number of theoretical models have since evolved, as student services professionals attempted to integrate theory and practice.

The Human Development Facilitator. In 1972, O'Banion and Thurston proposed a model of the student personnel worker as committed to positive human development, possessing the skills and expertise needed to implement programs for the realization of human potential. Other aspects of the model included a decentralized and participative administration; shared responsibility by all college divisions for student development; encounter groups focusing on students' self-examination of their values, attitudes, beliefs, and abilities; and the involvement of student personnel workers in community outreach, the promotion of student participation in campus life and the education of their peers, and guardianship against oppressive institutional regulations.

The Maintenance Model. This model reduces the student development function to an unintegrated set of services available through various offices of the college, including admissions, registration, financial assistance, orientation, and counseling. McConnell's 1965 report to the Carnegie Foundation listed 36 different student personnel functions as essential to the community college. More recently, a taxonomy of student services developed for the California community colleges identified 106 core activities (O'Banion, 1989). While serving practical purposes, these kinds of listings obscure the philosophical basis for the student personnel profession.

The American College Personnel Association Model. In 1975, the Association released a position paper entitled "A Student Development Model for Student Affairs in Tomorrow's Higher Education." This paper significantly influenced the development of the student personnel function. As applied at the Dallas County Community College District, this model emphasizes the intentional and systematic use of adult development theories in carrying out assigned functions; the development of the skills and attitudes needed for lifelong learning; the creation of an environment conducive to student development; and the integration of learning experiences (O'Banion, 1989).

The League for Innovation in the Community College Model. In 1986, the League developed a statement, "Assuring Student Success in the Community College: The Role of Student Development Professionals," to provide a framework for the further evolution of the student development profession (Doucette and Dayton, 1989). The statement reaffirms the principles of student development established in previous years and recommends minimum requirements for assuring student success. It asserts that community colleges must: monitor student intake, progress, and outcomes; encourage student involvement with the campus; coordinate their programs with other colleges, secondary schools, business, and industry; implement comprehensive staff development programs; and promote an organizational culture and ethic that supports the institutional mission.

The League statement lists specific activities that student development professionals must undertake in order to achieve these goals. Other writers suggest that strong and effective leadership will be required before this plan or any other new model can be put into action. Creamer (1989) contends that leadership is the greatest single deficiency in student affairs today. He argues that too many people in

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leadership positions lack the foresight, vision, and skills needed to move the student development enterprise in a new direction.

The Challenge of Reform

In the coming decade, several challenges will influence the future direction of the nation's community colleges and the philosophical and theoretical framework of the student development profession.

The Quality Reformation. During the 1980's, several national commissions offered a variety of criticisms of and recommendations for higher education that have clear implications for student development, including those urging colleges to increase their expectations of students, become more directive, provide more information to students, and uphold high academic standards. Another result of this renewed emphasis on quality has been the reinstatement of placement testing as a central function of student services.

Educational Technology. McCabe (1989) suggests that student services should depend heavily on information technology for accurate and timely information in order to offer good advice and direction to students, to accurately monitor their progress, to give continual feedback, and to provide the correct intervention strategy based on accurate information.

Financial Constraints. Commonly, student personnel functions feel budget cuts earlier and more strongly than other college programs and services. Some student development professionals are addressing financial problems by implementing fee-based services, differential staffing, cooperative programs with community groups, and efforts to explore alternative funding sources (O'Banion, 1989).

Changes in Institutional Mission. A number of external forces are influencing the community college's mission. The federal government and several state governments are stressing the role of community colleges in economic development and vocational training. Florida is dealing with the question of the appropriateness of remedial education as a community college function, and California has virtually eliminated public funding for community service courses. If the mission of community colleges changes, so too will the mission of student development.

Enrollment Management McCabe (1989) predicts a significant role for student services in the following aspects of enrollment management: 1) data collection about the place of the college within the community, the interests of students, influences on college choice, and student perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the college; 2) a comprehensive plan for the college's interaction with students from the time they first inquire about the college until they register; and 3) monitoring students' responses to the college's programs and services.

Conclusion

Student development professionals will continue to play an important role in promoting the mission and goals of their institutions. The demands and constraints of the past decade will require the development of innovative strategies and practices to address the requirements of the future. The 1990's will provide student development professionals with the challenge to forge new models for the delivery of student services, well grounded in theory and appropriate in practice.

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